

Message Text

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ACTION CU-03

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FM AMEMBASSY ACCRA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5688

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E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: SCUL
SUBJECT: STEVIE WONDER

REF: STATE 301107

1. BEFORE APPROACHING GHANAIAAN AUTHORITIES ON POSSIBLE
STEVIE WONDER ACCRA APPEARANCE BELIEVE A FEW ISSUES WHICH LIKELY
TO BE RAISED SHOULD BE CLARIFIED. THESE ARE:

A. ANY PAYMENTS WHICH MUST BE MADE IN NON-CEDI CURRENCIES
SURE TO RAISE MAJOR OBSTACLE IN VIEW GHANA'S CONTINUING SEVERE
FOREIGN CURRENCY CONSTRAINTS. GHANA GOVERNMENT (WHICH MUST BE
INVOLVED NO MATTER WHAT THE SPONSORSHIP) COULD PROBABLY
ORGANIZE HOTEL ACCOMMODATION, PRINTING, PUBLICITY, TRANSPORT, ETC.
USING GOVERNMENT FACILITIES. BUT THEY WOULD BE EXTREMELY
RELUCTANT AND POSSIBLY TOTALLY UNABLE TO PRODUCE CASH PAYMENTS
IN OTHER THAN CEDIS AND EMBASSY DOES NOT BELIEVE IT WOULD BE TO
U.S. ADVANTAGE TO PRESS THEM TO DO SO. IN EFFECT THIS WOULD
PROBABLY MEAN WONDER AND GROUP WOULD HAVE TO PERFORM WITHOUT FEE.
TICKETS WOULD HAVE TO BE SOLD IF ONLY TO LIMIT CROWD BUT
PROCEEDS WOULD HAVE TO STAY IN COUNTRY--POSSIBLY BE DONATED
TO GHANA NATIONAL TRUST (EQUIVALENT OF NATIONAL COMMUNITY CHEST).
NEED TO KNOW WHETHER THIS WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE.

B. UNQUESTIONABLY IDEA WOULD HAVE SPECIAL APPEAL TO GOG IF
WONDER COULD TIME A GHANA VISIT FOR JUST BEFORE RATHER THAN
JUST AFTER HIS LAGOS SOJOURN. JANUARY 13 WILL BE NATIONAL
REDEMPTION DAY MARKING ANNIVERSARY OF PRESENT GOVERNMENT'S
ACCESSION TO POWER AND GOG WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY LEAP ON STEVIE
WONDER APPEARANCE ON OR ABOUT THAT DATE AS EMBELLISHMENT OF
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THAT OCCASION. THIS A HIGHLY POLITICAL EVENT AND POSSIBLY NOT

BEST TIMING, BUT IT MAY WELL BE REQUESTED BY GOG IF APPROACHED. IT IMPORTANT FOR US TO KNOW, THEREFORE, WHETHER THIS WOULD BE A REALISTIC POSSIBILITY.

C. ESPECIALLY AS GHANA GOVERNMENT ITSELF SEEMS ONLY POSSIBLE SPONSOR FOR A PROJECT THIS SIZE IT ALSO IMPORTANT TO KNOW IN ADVANCE WHETHER WONDER'S APPEARANCE PLANNED AS CU/ARTS PRESENTATION AND SUBJECT TO THE RULES ON CONTRACTS, ETC. OF THAT PROGRAM. IN THAT EVENT IT WOULD BE ESSENTIAL TO MAKE THE LIMITATIONS CLEAR TO THE GOG AT OUTSET. PLEASE ADVISE.

2. BEFORE APPROACHING GOG AUTHORITIES EMBASSY CAN REPORT THAT IN ITS JUDGMENT STEVIE WONDER APPEARANCE WOULD BE GREETED ENTHUSIASTICALLY AND, WITH REASONABLY COMPETENT LOCAL MANAGEMENT (WHICH, HOWEVER, CANNOT BY ANY MEANS BE GUARANTEED) WOULD BE HEAVILY PATRONIZED. BELIEVE A SINGLE CONCERT AT ACCRA'S BLACK STAR SQUARE STADIUM WOULD COVER GHANA'S NEEDS.

3. WILL APPROACH GOG OFFICIALS REGARDING EITHER SPONSORSHIP OR NECESSARY COOPERATION WITH COMMERCIAL SPONSORS (LATTER EXTREMELY UNLIKELY IN VIEW SIZE THIS PROJECT) UPON RECEIPT CLARIFICATION ABOVE POINTS IF GENERALLY RESPONSE--WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO ITEM A ABOVE--IS POSITIVE. SMITH

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